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more striking and attractive than that

comprising the narrative of Spanish conquest in

the Americas. Teeming with interest to the

historian and philosopher, to the lover of

daring enterprise and marvellous adventure

it is full of fascination. On the vast impor-

tance of the discovery of a western hemi-

sphere, vying in size, as it one day, perhaps,

may compete in civilization and power, with

its eastern rival, it were idle to expatiate.—

But the manner of its conquest commands

unceasing admiration. It needs the concur-

ring testimony of a host of chroniclers and

eye-witnesses to convince succeeding genera-

tions that the hardships endured, the perils

surmounted, the victories obtained, by the

old conquistadores of Mexico and Peru, were

as real as their record is astounding. The

subjugation of vast and populous empires by

petty detachments of adventurers, often scantily

provided and ignorantly led—the extraor-

dinary daring with which they risked them-

selves, a few score strong, into the heart of

unknown countries, and in the midst of hos-

tile millions—require strong confirmation to

obtain credence. Exploits so romantic go

near to realize the feats of those fabulous

paladins who cased in impervious steel and

wielding enchanted lance, overthrew armies

as easily as a Quixote scattered merinos.—

Hardly, when the tale is put before us in the

quaint and garrulous chronicle of an Oviedo,

or a Zarate, can we bring ourselves to ac-

cept it as a history, not as the wild invention

of imaginative monks, beguiling conventual

leisure by the composition of fantastical ro-

mance. And the man who undertakes, at

the present day, to narrate in all their details

the exploits and triumphs of a Cortes or of a

Pizarro, allots himself no slight task. A

clear head and a sound judgment, great in-

dustry and a skillful pen, are needed to do

justice to the subject; to extract and combine

the scraps of truth buried under mountains

of fiction and misrepresentation, to sift facts

from the partial accounts of Spanish jurists

and officials, and to correct the boastful mis-

representations of insolent conquerors. The

necessary qualities have been found united

in the person of an accomplished American

author. Already favorably known by his

histories of the eventful and chivalrous reign

of Ferdinand and Isabella, and of the ex-

ploits of the Great Marquis and his iron fol-

lowers, Mr. Prescott has added to his well-

merited reputation by his narrative of the

Conquest of Peru. In its compilation he has

spared no pains. Private collections and

public libraries, the archives of Madrid and

the manuscripts of the Escorial, he has ran-

sacked and collated. And he has been so

scrupulously conscientious as to send to Li-

ma for a copy of the portrait whose engraving

faces his title-page.

The discovery of America infected Europe

with a fever of exploration. Scarce a coun-

try was there, possessing a sea-frontier,

whence expeditions did not proceed with a

view to appropriate a share of the spoils and

territory of the new-found *El Dorado*. In

these ventures Spain, fresh from her long

and bloody struggle with the Moor, and

abounding in fierce unsettled spirits, eager

for action and adventure, took a prominent

part. The conquests of Cortes followed

hard upon the discoveries of Columbus; Dutch,

English and Portuguese pushed their

investigations in all directions; and, in less

than thirty years from its first discovery, the

whole eastern coast of both Americas was ex-

plored from north to south. The vast empire

of Mexico was added to the Spanish crown,

him milk." Young Pizarro subsequently re-

quired this porcine nourishment by taking

care of his foster-mother's relatives. The

chief occupation of his youth was that of a

swineherd. Gomara's account of his birth,

however, is only one of many, various and

contradictory in their details. The fact is

that very little is known of the early years of

Francisco Pizarro.

Without attempting to follow Mr. Prescott

through his detailed and interesting account

of Pizarro's difficulties, struggles and adven-

tures, during the six years that intervened

between his first departure from Panama and